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ABSTRACT

Young women perceive themselves today as equally entitled, active citizens of society. Women's interest in helping to shape politics and society has grown. The German Women's Council, an umbrella organization of about 100 German women's associations, commemorates this year the 100th anniversary of the death of Louise Otto-Peters, the founder of the first General Women's Association in 1865. The demand for equal rights is still very topical 130 years later. Women's legal status has improved slowly. Concrete steps have been the reform of the divorce law, the right to a child-upbringing holiday, and reform of the pension law. The Second Equal Rights Act in force since September 1994, which embodies important improvements for women in work and society, is a substantial advance. In-school and vocational training has become a taken-for-granted part of female life. However, women continue to have disproportionately smaller shares of senior positions in federal authorities. Fewer women are self-employed. They earn less than men and have more part-time positions and a higher unemployment rate. On the other hand, the Maternity Protection Act provides protection for pregnant working women and the Marriage Act reform of 1977 has improved the situation of the nonworking wife through pension equalization. The phrase "poverty is female" is increasingly losing its bite because of better legislation. (YLB)

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Social Policy

WOMEN IN GERMANY

by

Ingrid Zahn

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1. Introduction

Women in Germany: Where did they stand yesterday, where do they stand today, what are their goals for tomorrow?

Politician Rita Süssmuth, President (Speaker) of the German Bundestag (Federal Parliament) and Chairwoman of the **Women's Union**, has no difficulty in answering this question:

> "Now as before it's a question of equal rights and the removal of discrimination. And furthermore: it's a matter of revolutionary social change. In this situation of radical change, many people talk a lot about the "computer age" or the "age of gene technology". The real symbol for the new era, however, is the changed role of women, the change in the relations between the sexes."

To recall for all who feel addressed by this social change, attention is drawn to Article 3, para 2 of the Basic Law (Constitution) of the Federal Republic of Germany. Until the autumn of 1994 it stated:

"Men and women have equal rights."

Paragraph 2 was then supplemented as follows:

> "The State shall seek to ensure equal treatment of men and women and to remove existing disadvantages."

This supplement illuminates the deficiency and develops explosive force. With it, the Constitutional legislators have decisively improved the prerequisites for **actual** social equality. Translating that into political everyday life calls for a changed perception of equal opportunities, rights and duties for all women and men in our society. Many previous beneficiaries of traditional privileges may find that hard to accept. But the rethinking is necessary if the intentions of the Constitutional legislators are not only to be cited, but also to gain a foothold in practice.

Much has been achieved in this sense, but there is more to be done.

In view of the intellectual, political and economic challenges of the coming decades, society cannot afford to distribute its resources unequally between men and women and exclude women from decision-taking processes. So warned Claudia Nolte, German Federal Minister for the Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, in an address to the Konrad Adenauer Foundation's International Women's Conference at St. Augustin, near Bonn, in the run-up to the 4th World Women's Conference in Peking in September 1995.

Mrs Nolte sees the equal rights policy as being in a dynamic stage that goes beyond the scope of a mere policy of women for women. In order to cope with the abundance of pending tasks, she considers it necessary that the different political fields should be cross-linked - not only at the national level, but also internationally. Only so can the situation be achieved whereby women co-decide as early as the setting of political signals. "We must get involved!" is the minister's appeal to women.

The appeal is not new. It has a tradition.

2. Change in the traditional role model

The role model of women as exclusively the guardian of home and hearth, which stems from the last century, has become covered with a strong patina. War and expulsion, refugee misery and destroyed cities have demanded of countless German women the assumption of the role of the fallen or physically or mentally wounded husbands and sons. As "Trümmerfrauen", the women who cleared bomb rubble after the war with their bare hands, they became a legend. Thrown upon their own resources, they had to secure the survival of the family. As women capable of acting independently, they have put their stamp on five decades of German postwar history. Their daughters were able to go on from their successes. Their grandchildren face no less difficult tasks in equalising the different living conditions in both parts of Germany, as well as in the tieing-in of this Germany in the politically desired framework of a European Union and its democratic security systems.

Young women perceive themselves today as equally entitled, active citizens of this society. They are cosmopolitan and accustomed to playing an independent role in their work and society. In the former German Democratic Republic it was simply a matter of course that 90 per cent of the women worked. They reject the model of the financially-dependent "just a housewife". Rather more, young women feel themselves excluded when they play no independent role, and that regardless of their financial situation.

Women's interest in helping to shape politics and society has grown. Increasingly, they are involving themselves in political parties, organisations and initiative groups. Women have introduced new subjects and concepts in the discussion and pointed out structural errors in society. Women's organisations and groups have a substantial share in the fact that awareness of the disadvantaging of women has risen, and that interest in the realisation of equal opportunities for women and men, as well as partnership, is growing.

In their social commitment, women concentrate mainly on the social area. In recent years, however, they have also increasingly engaged themselves politically. But they continue to be under-represented in public life. This is so not least because many advisory and decision-taking bodies see as a requirement for membership of them the holding of professional positions which women often do not achieve. Occupational promotion therefore improves the possibilities for women not only to co-work in society, but also to co-decide. Valuable experience stemming from family work, which is very useful for many public tasks, is still not sufficiently considered in the assessment of women's occupational qualifications. Social recognition of family activities is therefore also an important step for the co-determination possibilities of women in public life.

It is still more difficult for women than it is for men to make a successful working life compatible with a happy family life. A change can be noted, however, amid a growing participation of fathers in the care of small children, a rethinking towards partner-like togetherness.

3. Looking back at the German women's movement

Looking back at the beginnings of the German women's movement, it is clear with what staying power women have inter alia fought for the right to participate in public life at all levels. The **German Women's Council** as the "women's lobby" and umbrella organisation of about 100 German women's associations with consultant status at the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, commemorates this year the 100th anniversary of the death of an important woman. Louise Otto-Peters (1819-1895) gave the women's movement decisive impetuses. She was, among other things, the founder of the first General Women's Association in 1865. But much earlier, in 1843, she had summed up her motivation for her lifelong fight for women's rights with the much-quoted sentence:

"The participation of women in the interests of the State is not a right, but a duty."

For her, the path to this goal was the improved qualification of women and their occupational independence.

"I Canvass Women Citizens for the Empire of Freedom" was the title of the political women's newspaper that Mrs Otto-Peters published in 1848. The paper spoke up for the adult woman who demanded the right to education, not superficially as "an end in itself", but "for the benefit of society" in order to serve the "freedom of humanity". That was the means by which the existing misery was to be reduced and the dismantlement of social class antagonisms achieved.

The themes which the General German Women's Association took in hand in 1860s and 1870s also by no means look musty today. They involved, for example, demands for industry and trade schools for girls, safety provisions for women workers, maternity rights, equal occupational opportunities, equal pay for equal work, equal freedom of economic pursuit, and votes for women. So-called women's employment associations sprang up everywhere in Germany in those days. They opened for women the doors to "men's domains" - such as the railways, the Post Office and the telegraph service. In 1908, the German women's movement achieved approval of the admission of women to study at all universities. Also in the same year, the new

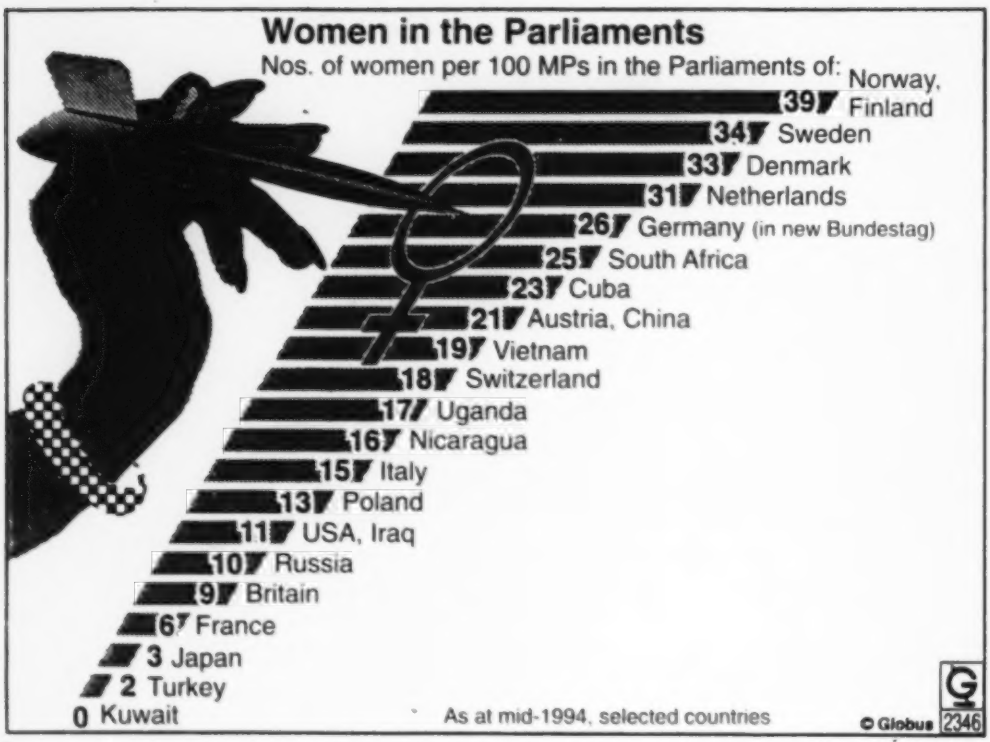
Associations Act came into force. Women could now attend political assemblies and become members of political associations. Besides that, there was the demand for votes for women. In 1918, women were given the right to vote for the first time and could stand as election candidates.

The right to vote provided at first the big breakthrough. For a time, more women sat in the Parliament of the Weimar Republic (1919-1933) than in the German Bundestag. They fought for women's rights and pushed through important legal positions, e.g. the appoval of women as jury members, judges (1922) and the right to maternity protection (1927).

National Socialism brought a heavy setback for women in working and public life. The political disqualification of women was total. In the Nazi women's organisations it was only about domestic science, child care and nutrition. Women were pushed back into private life to free jobs. This changed again in 1939 when with the outbreak of war female workers were called for.

After 1945 the new start was used not only to build on what had been achieved before 1933. The Basic Law of 1949 created a completely new starting situation. Equality was enshrined as a basic right in Article 3, para 2 with "Men and women have equal rights". Its realisation is a Constitutional imperative.

Also today, 130 years after the founding of the General Women's Association, the demand for equal rights is still very topical. "I believe that one does not offend anybody when one notes that no country has yet been successful in actually realising the equal rights of women and men," Angela Merkel, Claudia Nolte's ministerial predecessor and now Environment Minister, commented succinctly. On the contrary, the 3rd World Women's Conference in Nairobi 10 years ago disclosed a worsening of the situation of women in many countries.



More influence for women

Women who participate actively in political events and have won a position of equality in these men's domains are already a matter of course in the Scandinavian countries. Also in Germany, more and more women are now involved in politics. In the new Bundestag, every fourth seat is held by a woman. But British and French women have less influence; they are represented in Parliament predominantly by men.

Statistics: Inter-Parliamentary Union, Geneva Chart: Globus

4. The woman's legal status

The woman's legal status has rather more improved only slowly over decades. The equal rights of men and women were established back in 1949 in the German Basic Law. Nevertheless it took until 1957 before the Marriage Act adopted the fundamental equality of the woman. Then in 1977 came the reform of the divorce law. The "guilt principle" was replaced by the "irretrievable breakdown principle". That means the marriage is dissolved when it has objectively broken down and the former partners have lived apart for at least one year. Before the reform, a wife had a claim to maintenance only when she was divorced as a "not guilty" party. The divorce ended on principle the economic relations of the former spouses. But an ex-wife who had no income of her own was paid maintenance for herself and her children by her ex-husband. German lawmakers also considered the entitlement of the divorced woman to an old-age pension. If, for example, the former husband was the only one in employment, the ex-wife has a claim to half of the pension entitlement accrued by her ex-husband during the period of their marriage.

Meanwhile, other concrete steps in almost all areas of women's lives have got under way. These are also connected with precisely the additional motivation provided by the German unification treaty of 1990, which led to the German Democratic Republic's accession to the Federal Republic of Germany and demanded the removal of still-existing disadvantages for women.

The right to a child-upbringing holiday for a current total of three years (two of them with payments of an upbringing allowance), is one such marked step forward. As is also the recognition of child-upbringing and child-care periods in calculating old-age pensions, or the law covering assistance for pregnant women and families. The reform of the pension law, as well as the amendments to the laws on unemployment insurance and employment promotion, are also part of the progress. Equally, the **Second Equal Rights Act** in force since September 1994, which embodies important improvements for the woman in her work and society, is a substantial advance. In this context, it should be noted that the Act also covers the better compatibility of work and family for men.

5. Focal points of the Second Equal Rights Act

The focal points of the Second Equal Rights Act can be noted in four areas. On the one hand, there is the law for the promotion of women and the compatibility of family and work at the Federal administrative and Federal courts level.

What does it effect? Every government department is obliged to draw up a three-year plan to promote women. This must identify a binding objective aimed at eliminating the under-representation of women in all important areas. The plan must be made public. If its objective is not achieved, this must be explained and reported to the department's higher authority. Women's representatives must be appointed to all departments with a staff of from 200 upwards. The representatives are exempt from direction, and inter alia have a right to inspect files and complain, as well as to the assertion of the women promotion plan at their own initiative.

It should also be pointed out here that at the municipal level there are in the meantime almost 1,300 equal treatment offices which safeguard women's interests in the sense of more equality. At Federal and Land (state) level, this is done by the women's ministries or comparable institutions. Important prerequisites for effective work are inter alia powers which cross ministerial or departmental fiefdoms, early participation in staff decisions and all administrative ones with which equal rights issues are connected, the right to carry out independent public relations work in agreement with administrative heads, adequate office equipment and sufficient budget funds. Municipal equal treatment offices can also assist in individual cases. At the same time, they can give important impetuses for structural changes in the community and spur the promotion of women in the local authorities themselves.

The municipal equal treatment offices have formed themselves into **working groups** at Land and Federal level in order to improve their possibilities of bringing political influence to bear. The Federal Ministry for Women and Youth maintains contacts with the municipal offices and the working groups, and promotes an exchange of experience.

The law on the equal treatment of women and men at the workplace is a second focal point. It also has great significance for women in the private sector. It removes hitherto legal vagueness

in the case of a gender-related disadvantaging. The person discriminated against now has a clear and appropriate claim to compensation of up to three months' pay. Another concrete gain in equality of opportunity is the changed form of job advertisements. They must now be worded gender-neutral throughout. More and more ministries are involving women in personnel departments and selection boards.

A third focal point is the law to protect employees from sexual harassment at the workplace. It applies to all civil service employees at Federal, Land and local government level and in the private sector. The criteria for what is understood as open and concealed sexual harassment are objectively applicable. Employers and superiors must investigate all cases of suspicion without delay and end the harassment.

A relatively "harmless" example: The qualified employee Ingeborg B. does not agree with her office colleague setting up a pornographic picture gallery within her view. She complains to her superior. He or she doesn't forward the complaint to the personnel department, but leaves it to the staff representative council to admonish the harassing colleague. He does not react to that. Ingeborg insists on a desk in another office without pornography. She has her way.

A ban on disadvantaging is part of the protection measures for female employees such as Ingeborg. If necessary, she may also refuse to work in order to induce the harasser to change his behaviour. And she may do this without having to take a cut in pay.

Another focal point of the Second Equal Rights Act is the law on the composition of Federal bodies. It has the task of speedily increasing the still small number (7 per cent) of women in the more than 1,000 bodies within the Federal sphere of influence (in advisory councils, commissions, committees, etc.).

6. Training and occupations

In-school and vocational training for girls and young women, as well as the desire for further training for older women with or without grown-up children, has meanwhile become a part of female life concepts in Europe that is taken for granted. Women in western Germany interrupt their employment longer or give it up completely when they have children, rather more than do women in eastern Germany. An equal rights policy cannot be abbreviated to occupational promotion alone. Rather, it must leave open, without role constraints, the choices women have made and are responsible for in their own path through life. That means it must offer women the possibility to return to their occupation after completion of the family phase.

Compulsory education in Germany begins at the age of six, and as a rule ends after 10 years. Compulsory vocational training ends at 18.

The trend to higher education for girls noticed since the beginning of the 1980s has continued. In 1992, 52 per cent of all girls attended a higher school, 51 per cent of the school-leavers obtained the university entrance qualification, and no less than 38 per cent the qualification to attend a technical college. The pictures and texts of some school books cling stubbornly to the traditional role-casting of male and female inclinations and tasks. Taking measures against that and thus overhauling the traditional clichés of "brave" boys and "docile" girls will still cost much creative imagination and money. Nevertheless, young women's interest in commercial and technical occupations has clearly increased. Today, about 61,000 (8.5 per cent) of all female apprentices are trained in these occupations. In 1977, they made up only 2.5 per cent.

Under the dual vocational training system (that means the usual vocational training in the Federal Republic of Germany of in-company training and parallel with that two days a week at a vocational training school), girls account for 41 per cent of the trainees. They are also showing increased interest in "male-dominated" occupations (trades, for example). But they find it difficult to gain a foothold in them. Pilot schemes at Federal and Land level are to back them up in this connection.

The number of female students has risen from 38 per cent (1980) to 43 per cent (1993). Similar to vocational training, a distinct gender-related differentiation still shows itself here. Now as before, only a few women study engineering. With 33.3 per cent reading mathematics and natural sciences, however, the percentage looks much more promising.

7. Facts: the daily working life of women

For the second time in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany, a woman became on November 25, 1988 President (Speaker) of the German Bundestag (Annemarie Renger held the post from 1972 to 1976), and thereby assumed responsibilty for the second highest State office after the Federal President. She is Rita Süssmuth, who until then was Federal Minister for Youth, Family and Health. The President of the Federal Constitutional Court is named Jutta Limbach and is the mother of three children. Claire Marienfeld has become the first woman to hold the office of Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces. That is good news. But it shouldn't satisfy us prematurely. In the highest Federal authorities (ministries, etc.), the women's share of senior positions is only 6.7 per cent. The women's share in German parliaments has risen since the 1980s, but despite that it lies between only 11 per cent and 36 per cent. Only 5.7 per cent of all university teachers are female.

Of the approximately three million self-employed in Germany (eastern and western), about 800,000 are women. Their share, however, (still) does not correspond to that of women as part of the workforce as a whole. Among working men, every 10th is self-employed, but among the women only about every 20th. In the new German Länder (states), women account for about 150,000 of the current total of 480,000 self-employed people. Their corresponding share in the "old" Länder, of about one-quarter, is distinctly lower. In 1991, all of 3 per cent of all working women held senior positions in industry and commerce. Only 12 women, for example, have seats on the executive boards of Germany's 600 leading public companies.

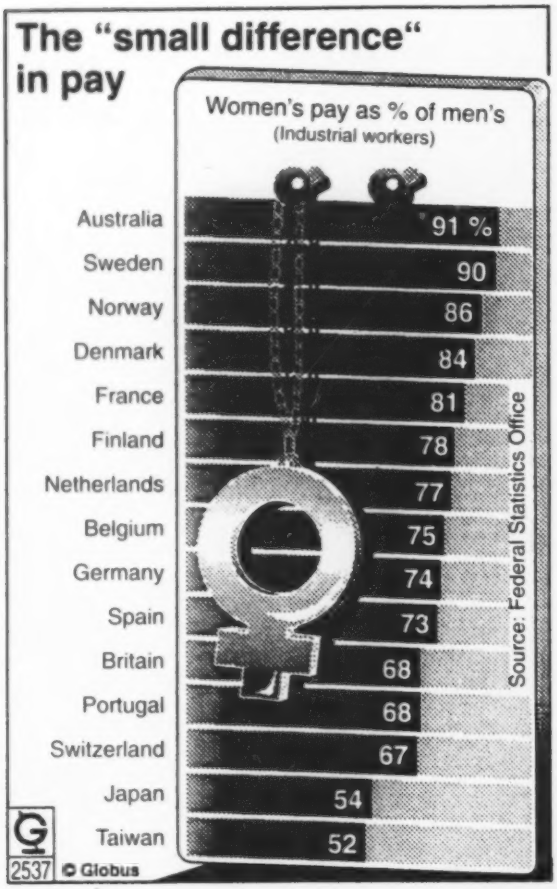
In Germany, by the way, there are three million more women than men. Working women make up 59 per cent of all women aged between 15 and 64. But they still earn on average just under one-third less than their male competitiors. Two out of three new jobs are taken by women.

It is also a fact that every third woman, but only every 40th man, works part-time. Put another way, 91 per cent of all part-time workers in the old and new Länder are women. From 1973 to 1993 the number of part-time workers more than doubled from about two million to just under 4.4 million. The part-time quota (the share of part-timers of all the workforce) rose from 8.7 per cent to 16.5 per cent.

And finally, while the unemployment rate for women in western Germany is 9 per cent, in the eastern part of the country it is more than 20 per cent. Women become unemployed more quickly and find new jobs less rapidly. Fewer apprenticeships are offered to girls than to their male classmates. For this reason, the German Federal Government, in cooperation with the new Länder within the framework of the Training Places Initiative East, has in particular made apprenticeships available for girls. Workplaces are assessed differently, and less is earned in the so-called "typical" women's occupations than in "men's jobs".

Like agriculture, many small trademen's businesses and commercial firms, and also private practices and offices of the professions in the Federal Republic of Germany depend on the services of wives or other family members. This work is often insufficiently covered by social security. A contract of employment for the collaborating wife offers protection, and is also important for her own old-age pension. If an employment contract exists, assisting wives can, for example, catch up on examinations after the death of their husbands and obtain special licences to continue to run the businesses.

Women are more and more using their right to have a say in a business and speak up for improvements in working life. For women and men should be represented in works councils corresponding to their numerical ratio in firms. The works council is the most important institution for representing employees' interests. The legal basis for it is the Employees' Representation Act. This embodies not only the participation and co-determination rights of the works council, but also those of individual employees. The number of female members of works councils has risen continuously since 1978. At present, their share is 20 per cent. The percentage of works council chairwomen increased from 10.7 per cent to 14.3 per cent.



Equal pay for equal work - when it comes to pay for women's work, this demand has not been met by a long way. In Germany, women workers are paid on average only 74 per cent of the wages of their male colleagues. In this regard, however, one must take into account that women work on average shorter hours than men and for fewer years. Furthermore, the well-paid positions are frequently held by men, be it that they are better trained or that they can pursue their careers undisturbed by housekeeping and bringing up children.

Statistics: Federal Statistics Office

Chart: Globus

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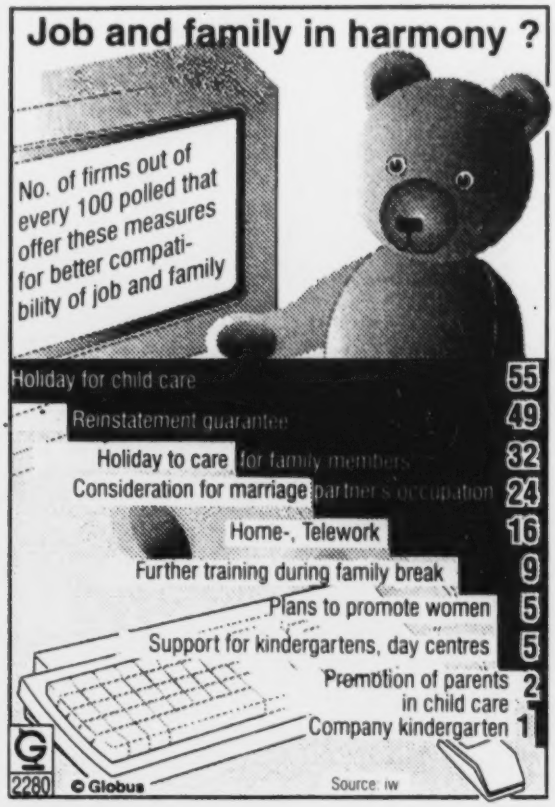
Job and family in harmony ?
No. of firms out of every 100 polled that offer these measures for better compatibility of job and family
Holiday for child care 55
Reinstatement guarantee 49
Holiday to care for family members 32
Consideration for marriage partner's occupation 24
Home-, Telework 16
Further training during family break 9
Plans to promote women 5
Support for kindergartens, day centres 5
Promotion of parents in child care 2
Company kindergarten 1
2280
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Source: iw

Support

Bringing job and family in harmony is often not made easy for working women. What support do businesses offer? The Institute of the German Economy put this question to more than 1,200 companies on behalf of the Federal Families Ministry. The finding: many companies make efforts to find solutions for a better compatibility of job and family - often beyond those prescribed by legal regulations. On the one hand, there are the "classic" means such as part-time jobs (also for highly-qualified employees). But there are also more and more companies that put their faith in such work organisation measures as unpaid holidays for child care or reinstatement guarantees. Offers of further training during family breaks, or company kindergartens, are seldom among the measures with which firms seek to project themselves as being family-friendly.

Statistics: Institute of the German Economy Chart: Globus

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8. Women and the family

It is true that the tasks of the housewife and mother are acknowledged in many laws and ordinances. But there is still not awareness everywhere that family work is worth just as much as work outside the home. If one were to incorporate the value of the unpaid housekeeping and family work in the macroeconomic accounts, the Gross National Product would increase yearly by DM 600 billion. Now as before, the family is the most prevalent form of life in Germany. In 1992, about 58 per cent of the population lived in such a community.

The forms of sharing life in Germany have continued to become pluralised. More than one-third of all flat-dwellers live as singles. Despite that, 87 per cent of the people in western Germany and 84 per cent in the eastern part of the country still regard marriage as meaningful. In 1992, 453,000 couples wed. The divorce figures have hovered around the level of 1985, about 30 per cent of marriages are dissolved. The number of divorce "orphans" and single parents is rising. In a first overall survey in the whole of Germany the number of single parent women and men was put at 2.5 million. Almost one-fifth of all families are single parents, 85 per cent of them women. About 10 per cent of them rely on social assistance for their subsistence. If the other parent does not meet his or her maintenance obligations, single parents with children under 12 can apply to their local Youth Office for an advance of maintenance.

The average age at marriage of single women has risen continuously, and for 1991 is given as 26.1 years. The birth rates, with 1.42 children per family in 1991, are in the lower spectrum even in a European comparison.

Above all, women who live with a partner and have children under 12 wish for part-time work. No less than 77 per cent of them expressed this desire in a representative survey. For all that, 28 per cent men in the same situation vote for this form of earning a living. As the millions of people who want part-time work currently far exceed the jobs on offer, the **Employment Promotion Act put full-time and part-time work on an equal legal footing**. The Federal Government has also made the promotion of part-time work a focal point of its action programme for more economic growth and employment.

The Maternity Protection Act is of particular importance for all working women (also for part-timers). According to this law, a pregnant woman cannot be sacked. During pregnancy and the first four months after giving birth, an employer's notice of termination is invalid if he knew of the pregnancy or birth or was informed of it within two weeks of receipt of the notice. During the protection period (as a rule, eight weeks after giving birth), the mother is absolutely forbidden to go to work. A pregnant woman may continue to work during the last six weeks before childbirth only if she expressly wishes to.

The end of the protection period does not mean the end of maternity protection with full pay. Rather, maternity protection continues in the context of the child-upbringing holiday (pursuant to the Federal Educational Maintenance Allowance Act) and is supervised by the local trade supervisory office as the competent authority.

Using the example of the qualified employee Ingeborg B., if she becomes pregnant she enjoys the rights desribed above. Per child, Ingeborg can draw a child-upbringing allowance for two years and claim an upbringing holiday for a total of three years. Her job will be held open during this period, or she will be offered a comparable one.

If she has several children and her family breaks extend beyond the legally allowed upbringing times, it can be that she must apply for further training or at least a familiarisation period in order to be able to keep pace in her occupation. Thus, she'll find herself once more in the group of 30-40 year-olds, who with a share of 39 per cent make up the largest contingent of women who would like to return to working life.

Given that she has adequate motivation, Ingeborg has good prospects of being helped to become fit for work again. Thus, she can endeavour to obtain from her local Labour Office a maintenance allowance to which she is entitled under certain conditions, or she can also claim child care costs.

All Federal Länder have opened advisory centres that are hereby obliged to give her constructive advice. New methods of occupational re-integration have been developed through special German Federal Government programmes.

9. Security for life

In the wake of the Marriage Act reform of 1977, the situation of the non-working wife above all has improved because of the so-called pension equalisation. Following a marriage of many years, Ingeborg's aunt Margerit was delighted by a more just pension equalisation than she had expected. Thus, inter alia, the expected pension was divided equally between her and her less-enraptured ex-husband.

For younger women such as Ingeborg, her livelihood is secured according to human judgement by her own employment or the joint income of her and her husband. The goal is an independent shaping of life, also in old age, without dependence on state institutions or relatives. Insured years accrued by oneself and, one day, the widow's pension, are the essential instruments for that. Maintenance payments and pension payments from the pension equalisation are helpful for women after a divorce. Since 1992, the extended child-upbringing periods of three years, as well as periods for the care of invalids, have been taken into account in the sense of improving pensions. The new law on old age and invalid care insurance which came into force in April 1995 considerably improved the social security of care persons.

10. Poverty and unemployment among women

"Poverty is female!" This phrase, which has been justified for all too long, is increasingly losing its bite because of better legislation. Whereas in Germany in 1980 women accounted for 63 out of every 100 social asistance recipients, and men only 37, this imbalance had already largely evened itself out by 1992. (Of every 100 welfare recipients only 52 are women.) In part, old age poverty is also declining. Thus, at the end of 1992 only 163,000 social assistance recipients of pensionable age were registered. This figure, however, does not include the "shamefaced poor" who for personal reasons shrink from claiming their social assistance entitlements.

Unemployment continues to worry the German Federal Government and also the people throughout the country. It hits working women particularly hard, and in the new Federal Länder has rapidly driven up the number of jobless women there.

In the former GDR almost all women who were fit to work did so. Most of them had qualifications as skilled workers or had graduated from a university or technical college. Even if in many cases they needed to work because of their relatively low family income, and it was also desired or decreed by the State, the women thus still brought about some self-realisation.

Women were, and still are, clearly more heavily affected by the upheavals in eastern Germany in the wake of the transformation process towards the market economy. At the end of 1994, the women's unemployment rate there was 19.2 per cent, double that of the men's.

A look over Germany's garden fence shows that in neighbouring countries there are more flexible working hours with more offers of job-sharing, part-time work and more variable remuneration (i.e. more flexible pay). In the meantime, the German Federal Government, the Länder and the municipalities spend billions of marks in order, for example, to promote women in line with their share of the unemployed. Thus, in eastern Germany 60.1 per cent of the job creation measures (June 1994) has already benefited women. The good works of many women's associations and private persons both within and outside the National Federation of German Women's Associations which, like the German Women's Council, perceive themselves as the "women's lobby" and target the "pent-up demand for justice", is also incalculable. The associations will underscore their aim with a catalogue of demands which they will also present at the 4th World Women's Conference in Peking in September 1995. Hanne E. Pollmann, a lawyer and managing director of the German Women's Council, comments: "The essential interests of women have all been expressed many times. What is missing is agreement on priorities and time-frames in which they are to be implemented."

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